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## Women's empowerment through openness: OER, OEP and the Sustainable Development Goals

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#### How to cite:

Perryman, Leigh-Anne and de los Arcos, Beatriz (2016). Women's empowerment through openness: OER, OEP and the Sustainable Development Goals. In: OEGlobal 2016: Convergence through Collaboration, 12-14 Apr 2016, Krakow, Poland.

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# Women's empowerment through openness: OER, OEP and the Sustainable Development Goals



Photo: [United Nations](#) CC-BY-NC-ND

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# Sustainable Development Goal 5

Target 5b: 'Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology (ICTs), to promote the empowerment of women'

Photo credit: United Nations. Public Domain





## Structure

### Institutional Rules, Norms and Practices

- State laws, policies and programmes across domains of information / media / communication / free expression / assembly / civil rights on the Internet / gender equality frameworks and programmes.
- Community gender norms and practices.
- Household gender roles, rules and processes.

### ICT Availability and Accessibility

## Agency

### Determined by:

- Gender, caste, class, ethnicity.
- Material, financial, natural, geographical, psychological, cultural, social, and educational resources; health and information resources used.

## ICT-mediated Capabilities

### Informational Power

- Access to information, including on public services / entitlements.
- Memberships in information networks.
- Capacity to produce information.

### Communicative Power

- Power to open up official communication channels.
- Power to engage / challenge informal power structures.
- Capacity to critique the status quo.
- Voice or ability to shape / challenge mainstream discourse in the public sphere.
- Use of media for content generation.

### Associational Power

- Ability to participate in community issues.
- Ability to participate in formal political groups (political party).
- Membership in community groups and collectives.
- Participation in collective action (filing petitions and holding protests).
- Peer support and solidarity.
- Vibrancy of membership groups and collectives.
- Cross-linkages of groups and collectives.
- Convening power of collectives to hold public forums.

# Women's empowerment through ICT: the potential

### Dimensions of Choice:

- Existence of choice.
- Sense of choice.
- Use of choice.
- Achievement of choice in social, cultural, organisational, economic and political domains.





# The reality

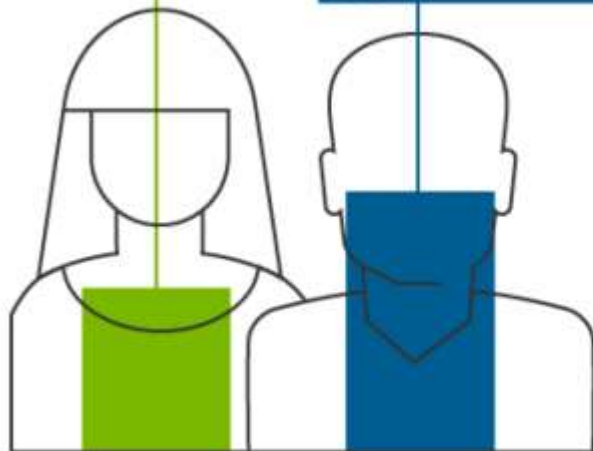


WORLD WIDE WEB  
FOUNDATION



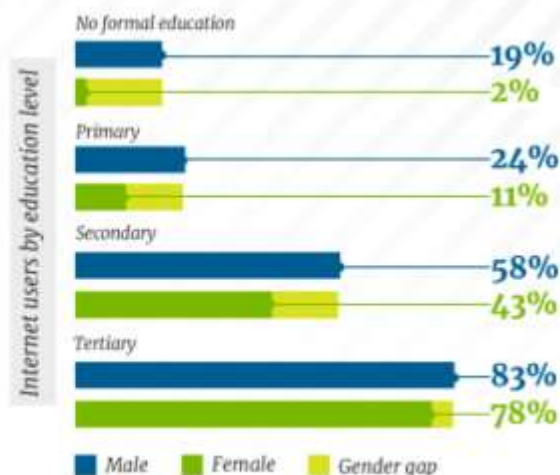
WOMEN ARE ABOUT 50% LESS LIKELY  
THAN MEN TO USE THE INTERNET IN  
POOR URBAN COMMUNITIES

37% of women we  
surveyed are Internet  
users vs. 59% of men.



Women who are politically  
active offline are **twice** as  
likely to use the Internet.

Access to higher education  
**narrows** the gender gap in  
Internet access



# The reality

## Inequalities and Respective Barriers

***Socio-Cultural*** (e.g. oppressing gender roles for women in male-dominated societies; religious beliefs and practices, gender-unequal social norms, lack of freedom to make decisions)

***Economic*** (e.g. lack of economic opportunities, no employment, inability to afford owning ICT equipment, high fees for Internet access)

***Demographic*** (e.g. lower caste, less education, dominance of English on the Internet, illiteracy, lack of ICT skill)

***Psychological*** (e.g., beliefs creating an inferiority complex among women and lack of confidence)

***Geographic*** (e.g. rural vs. urban location, poor transportation infrastructure, long distance to ICT facilities, poor signal strength)



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## Analysis of OERH dataset

**N=7,700**

**49% (63% of GS)**



**51% (37% of GS)**



N=7635	Global South 24%	Global North 76%
<b>Role</b>	38% informal learners 29% formal learners 32% educators	45% informal learners 28.4% formal learners 23.2% educators
<b>Gender</b>	62% male 36.6% female	44% male 55% female
<b>Age</b>	28% 25-34 years-old	22.3% 25-34 years-old
<b>Educational Qualification</b>	38% postgraduate 32% undergraduate	34.5% postgraduate 26% undergraduate
<b>Employment status</b>	48.3% full-time 13% part-time	47.2% full-time 17.7% part-time
<b>English native speakers</b>	31%	75%
<b>Internet Access</b>	56% mobile 49% home broadband	70% mobile 89% home broadband



# Research questions

Photo: [CCAFS](#) CC-BY-NC-SA

- To what extent are women being empowered in developing countries through OER and OEP?
- What are the barriers to women's empowerment in developing countries through open educational resources and practices?
- How might those barriers be removed?



# Main reasons for women using OER

	Global South women	Global North women
Professional development	68%	56%
Training others at work	22%	7%
Improving non-native language skills	33%	15%
Improving study skills	57%	48%



# Engagement with OER

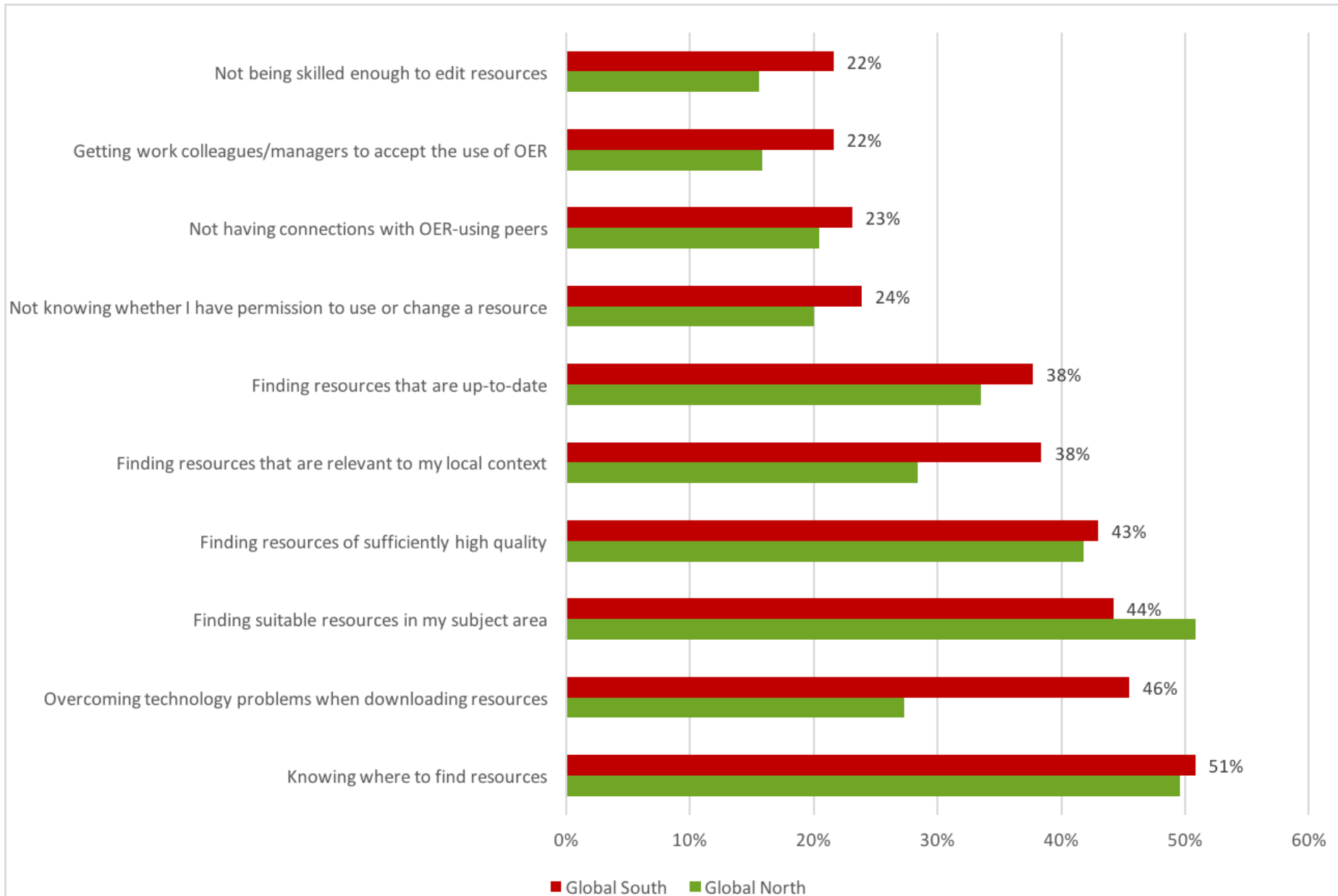


“I have started feeling that there is no harm in sharing my slides and other study material across the globe...”

	GLOBAL NORTH		GLOBAL SOUTH	
	Count	%	Count	%
I have adapted open educational resources to fit my needs	668	74.1	186	75.3
I have created open educational resources for study or teaching	230	25.5	70	28.3
I have created resources myself and published them on a CC license	78	8.6	16	6.5

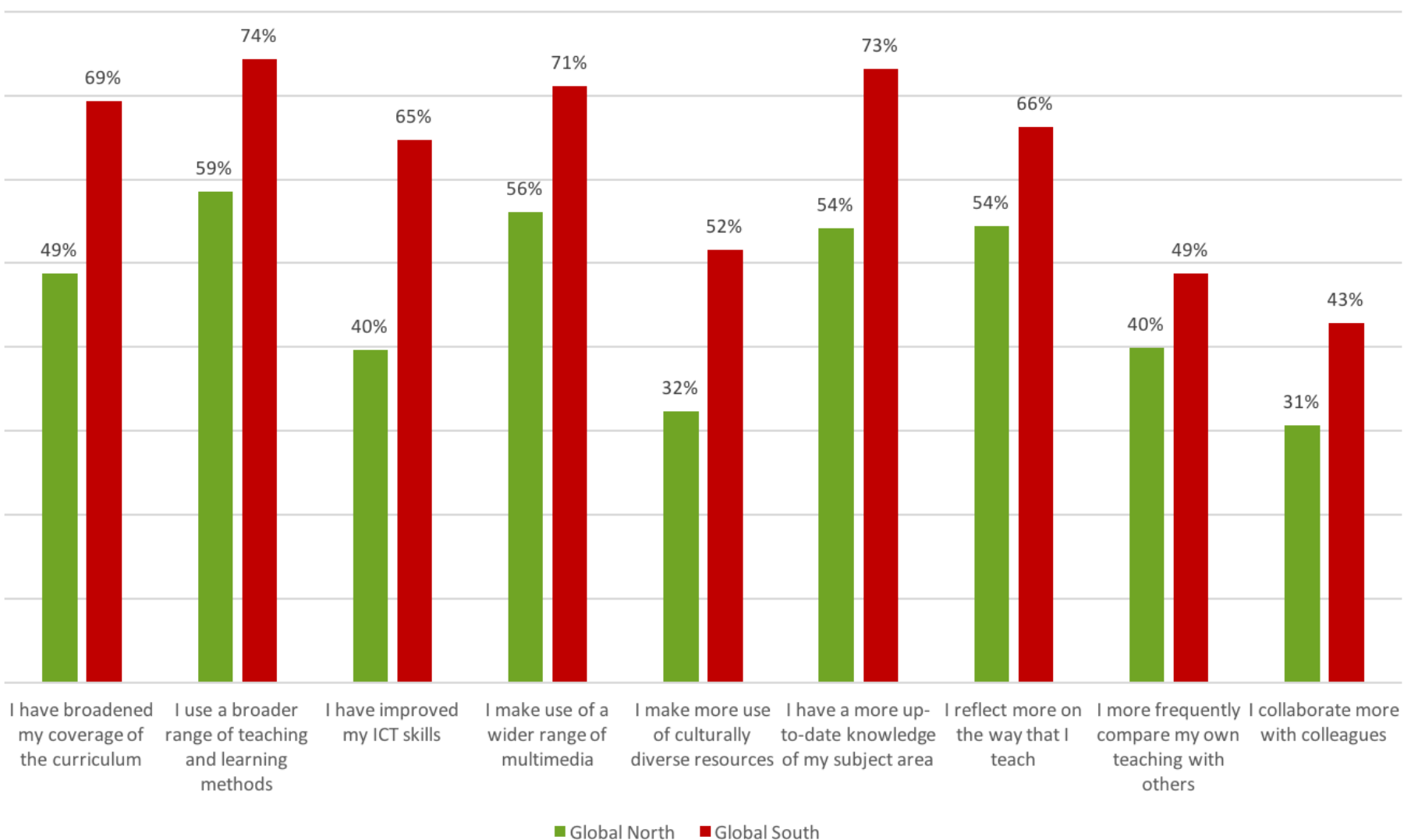


# Challenges experienced when using OER



# Impact of OER use on teaching

Impact of OER on teaching: comparing women in the Global North and Global South



# Impact of OER use on teaching - comparison between female and male educators in the Global South

	GLOBAL SOUTH			
	FEMALE		MALE	
	Count	%	Count	%
I have broadened my coverage of the curriculum	99	69.2	124	68.5
I use a broader range of teaching and learning methods	107	74.3	111	63.8
I have improved my skills in information and communication technologies	90	64.7	97	55.7
I make use of a wider range of multimedia	96	71.1	100	59.5
I make more use of culturally diverse resources	65	51.6	82	50.6
I have a more up-to-date knowledge of my subject area	101	73.2	108	63.2
I reflect more on the way that I teach	92	66.2	108	65.9
I more frequently compare my own teaching with others	63	48.8	87	52.4
I now use OER study to develop my teaching	66	56.4	71	49.3
I collaborate more with colleagues	54	42.9	85	51.5



# Implications: Engagement with OER and OEP, and women's empowerment

- **Financial** power & autonomy through low cost professional development.
- **Informational** power.
- **Associational** power through communities.



Photo: [DFID](#) CC-BY-NC-SA

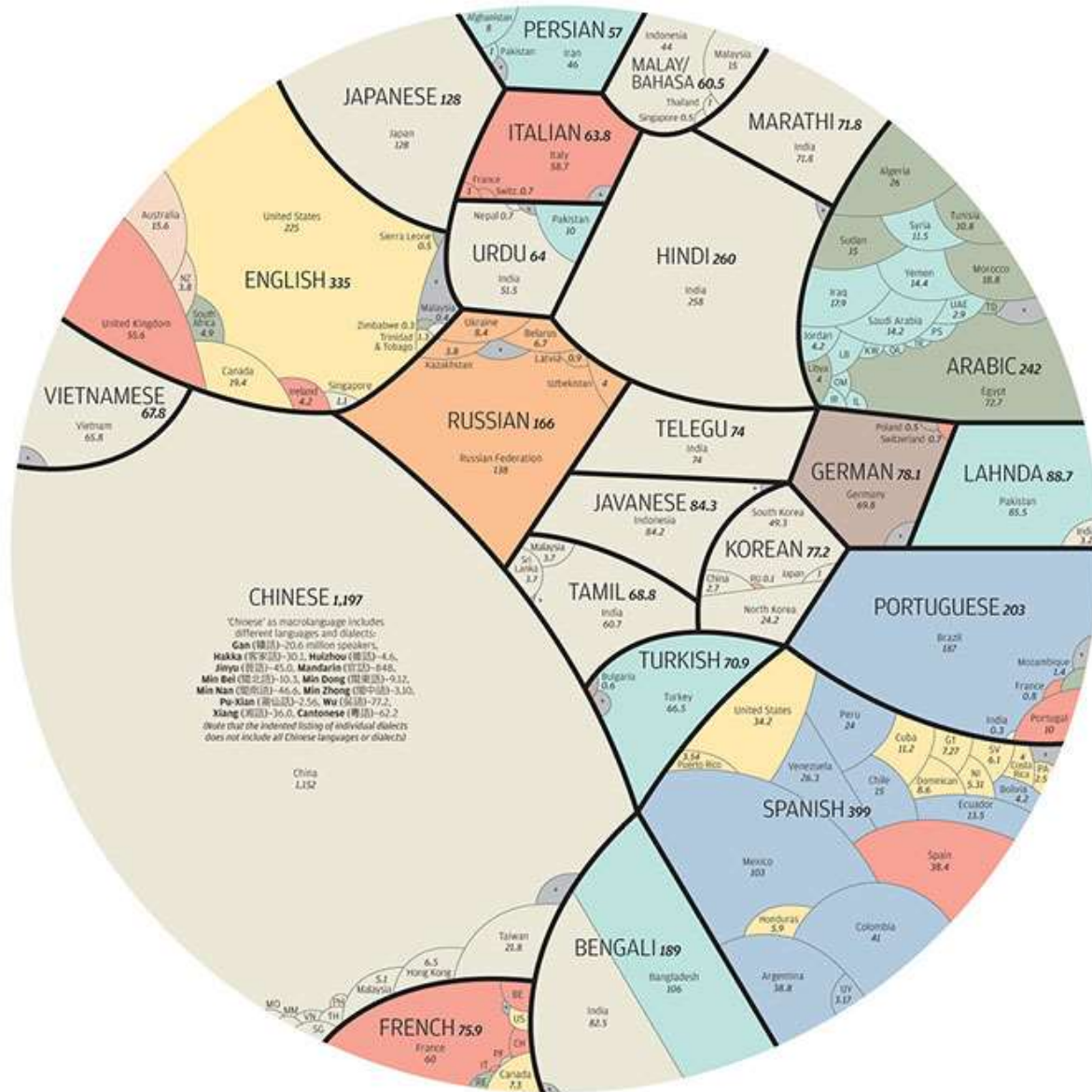


# Recommendations



# Localise OER (including mother tongue languages)

‘In many countries of the world there is gendered access to languages... Whereas men and boys have often had the opportunity to learn the language of power at school, women may only know how to speak their mother tongue’ (Robinson-Pant, 2007).





# Release OER in a variety of formats to minimise the cost barrier



- OER don't have to be digital
- Hard copy
- SD card
- Radio programmes
- Avoid big videos & games

# Develop and nurture communities of practice

- Peer-to-peer support & skills development around OER use & open educational practices
- Crowd-sourced translation & localisation





# Thank you for listening



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